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Reflection of gender divisions and feminine consciousness in Caryl Churchill's 'Owners'

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine Caryl Churchill's play 'Owners' through the lens of feminism. The play was created mostly in response to the ideas of the feminist movement of the 1960s - 1970s, which examines many of the similar themes. As one of the most influential feminists of her day, Simone de Beauvoir's opinions on women are discussed in relation to the play. Churchill places strong female characters front and centre and explores male power from several angles. In addition to in depth discussions on the previously mentioned aspects, the present research study covers a brief overview of contemporary feminism overall. It also questions the effects of patriarchy and the socially defined positions of women in Churchill's 'Owners'. As a consequence, it becomes clear that the dramatist highlights and displays the issues facing women of her day while also highlighting the significance of women's economic and emotional independence.

Keywords: sexism, feminism, gender, women, economic & emotional independence, patriarchy



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1. Introduction

The modern feminist movement, which began with the fight for women's suffrage and continues today as third-wave feminism, has undergone significant transformation over the previous century. During this extended time span, the movement was used as a literary theory, impacted a large number of authors, and was the focus of several creative works (Kumar, 2020, Jabeen et al., 2022). In this work, the researchers apply feminist theory to Caryl Churchill's play '*Owners*', set in the middle of the twentieth century. Second-wave feminists popularised the phrase "The Personal is Political" to describe the idea that women's political participation and individual behaviour are inextricably linked. Simone de Beauvoir, in her seminal nonfiction work *The Second Sex* (1949), argues that patriarchal culture often shapes issues connected to femininity. Gender roles are mostly determined by social and cultural standards, with particular consequences for women who must contend with male dominance. She also addresses parenthood, arguing that women's restricted access to contraception and abortion during the period leads to unplanned pregnancies and subsequent difficulties within families. Churchill challenges conventional notions of gender and highlights how biological and social constructions of sex and gender are distinct.

1.1 Research Problem

The present study investigates the impact of the social pressures on the individual female characters in Caryl Churchill's '*Owners*'. The researcher will apply feminist theory to Caryl Churchill's play '*Owners*', set in the middle of the twentieth century. Second-wave feminists popularised the phrase "The Personal is Political" to describe the idea that women's political participation and individual behaviour are inextricably linked. Simone de Beauvoir, in her seminal nonfiction work *The Second Sex* (1949), argues that patriarchal culture often shapes issues connected to femininity. Gender roles are mostly determined by social and cultural standards, with particular consequences for women who must contend with male dominance. She also addresses parenthood, arguing that women's restricted access to contraception and abortion during the period leads to unplanned pregnancies and subsequent difficulties within families. Churchill challenges conventional notions of gender and highlights how biological and social constructions of sex and gender are distinct.

1.2 Research Objectives

The present study aims at exploring the different forces that conspire against women as a result of their submission to what men want them to be. The main objective of the study lies in exploring Feminine Consciousness in in Caryl Churchill's '*Owners*'. Since the play was created and performed in 1972, the researchers would examine the period by learning about the status of British women and the influence of feminist ideals on the theatre. This paper will employ a socialist feminist critical framework to analyse Caryl Churchill's play '*Owners*', focusing on its exploration of the subversion of gender stereotypes and its engagement with capitalist issues. The drama places significant importance on the violation of gender norms by individuals of both genders, alongside an overwhelming pursuit of power that gives rise to materialistic preoccupations.

1.3 Research Significance

The significance of the present study lies in its aim to enhance readers' understanding of the feminist perspective employed by Caryl Churchill to illuminate the hardships endured by women due to various oppressive social and cultural factors prevalent in society. The feminist approach acknowledges the challenges women encounter while adapting to their environment and the diverse social and cultural limitations they encounter. In this particular context, feminism can be perceived as a methodology aimed at prompting the

reader to contemplate the position of women within a given circumstance prior to forming any evaluative conclusions about them. The exploration of the characters' predicament in Caryl Churchill's play '*Owners*' offers readers an opportunity to get insights into the themes of domestic and societal affliction.

2. Literature Review

The researchers were primarily prompted to conduct a critical evaluation of Caryl Churchill's work due to her portrayal of the situation of women during her era in her tragedies, as well as her identity as a female playwright.

According to Aston and Diamond (2009): "feminism for Churchill involves gender concerns grappling simultaneously with issues of class in a social context; she felt strongly about both feminism and socialism not willing to solicit a form of one that would exclude the other" (p. 4). Howard (2009) emphasized that "Churchill could never come to terms with capitalist sentiments and, as her whole career attests, she repeatedly returns to the pathologies induced by money-lust and to the suffering caused by the dreadful disparities capitalism creates between those who own and those who owe" (p.36). Vinegar Tom wraps "Churchill's historical moment, feminism and socialism into an intertwined whole. And yet the play provokes some questions from the depths of its internal associations which seem to have a stake beyond feminism".

On the other hand, shedding light on Feminism the theory in question, Ritzer (2004) suggests that "feminism is kind of critical social theory which included in social context, political, economic, and history that is facing by injustice people". She states that "Certain terms in contemporary theory, such as work, family, patriarchy, and sexuality, are used to sum up the basis experiences of women". Davies (1996) opines that "Feminism is women's assertion of their equality with men and their demand for access to those roles and positions of public life traditionally regarded as the province of men".

3. Designs/Methods/Findings/Results

The research is qualitative in nature and provides content analysis of Caryl Churchill's '*Owners*'. This study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the true essence and nature of feminism by examining the author's selection of words, sentences, and language. The primary focus of the selected play centres on the profound distress endured by women due to their presence inside a patriarchal societal framework. Hence, the present investigation employs a feminist perspective. The sociological approach to literature will be employed in this instance, as it involves anticipating the ways in which poetry might function both as a literary medium and as an educational instrument. This perspective exemplifies the notion that a piece of artwork possesses didactic qualities, with the objective of imparting knowledge or enhancing cultural understanding. This section will address the challenges encountered by young women inside a predominantly masculine culture, as examined by the researchers.

4. Discussion

The 1938-born author, Caryl Churchill, belonged to a middle-class family in London. (Hiley, 1990) Her diligent parents gave her a good start in life by ensuring that she received a quality education. Between 1948 and 1955, she accompanied her family to Canada, where she attended Trafalgar School. She returned to England after high school graduation. In 1960, she received her degree from Oxford. The following year, she married David Harter. She began her career as a writer when this marriage propelled her onto the London stage (Keyssar, 1983). Churchill had three children while living on the outskirts of London because of her husband's work. There, she essentially settled into the role of housewife and suffered through many ectopic pregnancies (Itzin, 1987).

All these odds in her life could not discourage her to follow her passion for writing. She was concerned with “the corrupting power of *ownership*—of human beings as well as of property” (Keyssar, 1983) when composing these plays. Churchill claims that her primary motivation for writing these plays was not to further a certain philosophy but rather to vent her own personal grief and anger (Itzin, 1987). She overcame her trauma and developed a sense of political awareness, which led to the creation of her debut theatrical play, ‘*Owners*’.

4.1. Feminist Approach and ‘*Owners*’

Churchill addresses the gender gap in economic and political spheres, as well as in her own life, in this play (Keyssar, 1983). Until she began her major professional career in 1972, she seemed to have been dissatisfied with her life. She describes her emotions at the moment in an interview with Itzin (1987) as:

“When the sixties were occurring, I didn’t feel like I was a part of them. I felt really alone at that moment. I was a young mother experiencing recurrent miscarriages. It was a very lonely existence. Being unhappy in my personal life, as the wife of a lawyer and a stay-at-home, mom motivated me to become politically active.”

Marion, the play’s main character, is portrayed as an extremely ambitious lady who has been hospitalised for some time due to her mental illness. Despite her background as a stay-at-home mom, she eventually finds success as a property developer thanks to her keen eye for business. The central idea of the play is that Marion’s husband, Clegg, a symbol of patriarchy, loses his power over her as her material possessions increase. Unfortunately, he helps Marion run the company even though he is continuously attempting suicide by slashing his wrists. Marion and Worsely have shown interest in purchasing the building that now serves as a home to Lisa and her indifferent husband Alec. They make many offers in an effort to convince them to part with the flat. Since Marion and Clegg do not have any children of their own, Marion plots to steal Lisa’s newborn from her once she gives birth. Clegg’s controlling and vengeful patriarchal attitude leads him to repeatedly plot the assassination of Marion, but he is always stopped in his tracks. Worse still, he does not tell Marion to be careful despite knowing about his intentions. Unlike the naive and incompetent Lisa, Marion is pushed by the influence of commerce to the detriment of her humanistic outlook. Churchill (1985) discusses the motivations for her book ‘*Owners*’:

“My first impression of Worsely came to me when I was at an elderly woman’s apartment and a young guy came by asking her for money to move, another was the desire to have one character embody the ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ spirit of energetic achievement, and yet another embodying ‘sitting quietly, doing nothing’. In order for the beliefs of the two people to stand out as what they were and not as what was expected of men and women, the more

assertive person had to be a woman, and the more receptive person had to be a guy. That's how the idea of Marion and Alec came about."

Since the play was created and performed in 1972, we may examine the period by learning about the status of British women and the influence of feminist ideals on the theatre. Female manufacturing workers demanded equal pay, sparking a movement that would eventually become known as the Women's Liberation Movement. Over 600 women attended the inaugural of the Movement in early 1970s in which to advocate for the promotion of equality in economic, educational, and occupational opportunities, a Coordinating Committee was established (Hannam, 2007). By the late 1970s, the second wave feminist movement had amassed support from approximately 12 million people, including at least one million new female activists in Western Europe. Certain pieces of legislation that assist women with their employment, salaries, education, and legalisation of abortion were made possible because of the movement. One change is that women no longer need to rely only on political and social groups to advocate for their rights; instead, they have formed their own organisations. Women's health clinics educated patients about their physical and hormonal changes and sexuality. In 1972, the first shelter opened its doors to support battered women. The 1970s were pivotal because they brought about better conditions for discussing women, and new innovations gave women the confidence to think and act in new ways. In addition, the percentage of married women under 60 working in the UK rose considerably from 50% to 60% between the early 1980s and the present. Over 30% of married women worked before the conflict aroused, this represents a significant increase since the conclusion of the Second World Conflict (Gomulka & Stern, 1990). Wages for men climbed by around 10%, while "household income," which includes money earned by both spouses, surged by 20%. It's reasonable to assume that both spouses' wages and other income increased significantly. Contrary to popular belief, research shows that women's employment rates progressively increased over the course of the decade, even as the income of both husbands and other providers increased.

There is no definitive survey comparing the number of male and female theatre employees from the 1960s and 1970s, but there is little doubt that women began to enter traditionally male-dominated fields like directing and writing. More plays were written by women and focused on female characters and their experiences. In the 1970s, theatres started to attract a younger, more politically aware audience interested in being a part of the fundamental transformation occurring in the theatrical industry. In 1968, individuals started to experience changes on a cultural level, marking the beginning of a period of rapid progress. The fight to end theatrical censorship began in the 1960s, but it wasn't until 1968 that it was finally won. Once the censorship was no longer in place, writers for the stage were free to explore whatever topic they pleased, leading to a richer and more nuanced canon. This made it simpler to respond to the prevailing political beliefs and wars of the period. Passionate asexuality, the practise of homosexuality (particularly for men), and filthy language were outlawed in the 1960s after a decision by Lord Chamberlain, but at the start of the 1970s, a feminist-activist atmosphere allowed for more experimental theatre (Wandor, 1984).

The ideological underpinnings of theatre were significantly altered in 1968. The new aesthetic movement argued that art should serve the greater good of society, suggesting that theatre should not just be accessible to the middle class but also take place in the communities and workplaces of the working poor. When feminist theatrical techniques started being interpreted subjectively, the same bias crept into the audience. Protests against the Miss World pageant and the consumerist perspective that used the pageant to exploit women's sexuality were well organised in 1970 and 1971. These demonstrations used street theatre to poke fun at the feminised ideal of beauty and to challenge the sustainability of the "only look" marketing strategy. In addition, agitprop plays highlight issues such as sexual discrimination, male dominance in the home, and the plight of working-class women. This feminist propaganda reflected the worries and enthusiasm

brought on by radical feminism's reunification and re-evaluation of Marxist studies. After the performances were performed, the theatre was transformed into a rough and enthusiastic zone where discussions took place.

As a consequence of these transformations, a new generation of women (not necessarily young) arose, many of whom are either immature as writers or write simple sitcom-style plays or poorly constructed social realism (Kumar, 2023 ;). Playwrights with more traditional measures of success, such as Pam Gems and Caryl Churchill, were represented in the second group. These female playwrights argued that a restricted set of patriarchal ideals was holding society back.

Throughout *'Owners'*, Clegg never gives up on the thought of murdering Marion because of his extreme patriarchal views, which border on sexism. He has a highly traditional view of gender roles and thinks women will never be as good as men. When Worsley asks Clegg if Marion would just open Clegg a new store in a more convenient location Clegg remarks that he won't even let her buy him a drink (p. 9).

It is widely accepted that the biological differences between the sexes shape the ways in which they interact with one another and the expectations placed on them by society. Almost every culture defines these positions, with the result that both sexes get significance beyond what their biological differences would suggest. It is well accepted that biological distinctions are linked to distinct 'psychological' (Moorthi et al., 2024) and social traits (Kumar et al., 2023). Therefore, it is believed that women would exhibit traditionally feminine traits and that men would act in traditionally male ways. To rephrase, cultural expectations for what a man or a woman should be like are established and stabilised over time, but these expectations vary from one society to the next. Recent research in the field of gender studies has shown that, although sex is a biological factor, gender has little to do with physical appearance and is instead largely influenced by what society and culture expects from it. To simplify, it seems that these concepts are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. The portrayal of biological differences between the sexes is regarded as the foundation upon which the need for gender roles is built. This never-ending cycle begins with the use of biological differences to define gender differences, which are then put to use to characterise biological differences that, in turn, necessitate the determination of gender differences. Gender may be understood in terms of a person's physical traits and sexual identity, but the major reasons that determine the distinction between the sexes are rooted in social and cultural assumptions. These predetermined gender roles contribute to several unfavourable circumstances for women in most civilizations (Kochuthara, 2011).

Churchill shows how women, especially married women, are saddled with heavy duties. Lisa is worried about the difficulties she may encounter if Alec and she were to divorce, but Alec is certain that their marriage will last. Although males are expected to help out around the house, women are still expected to take on the major responsibility of 'raising children' while simultaneously maintaining paid employment. Lisa has expressed her worries and concerns, but Alec doesn't appear to care about his family.

The political, social, and economic structures control women in countries where patriarchal ideals and practises are established, which in turn subordinate women in these spheres. A patriarchal society is maintained by the family unit, its fundamental unit, where the father is the head of the home and has authority over the family's material resources, progeny, work force, and gender-based ideas of merit and demerit. He puts up a kind and courteous façade in front of his female client, but as soon as she departs, his real colours emerge.

The more women achieve economic independence, the more they have the power to influence social and economic structures, which is a major factor in reducing the strict rules of patriarchy. Beauvoir argues that the stability of marriage is being threatened by women's increased economic independence. The modern definition of marriage is the union of two autonomous people with shared but distinct obligations. It's like a contract, and it's a crime to engage in sexual activity with anyone else. Divorce may be filed by either party under the same conditions. As a result of these changes in how marriage is seen, women's roles have

expanded beyond just bearing children; in other words, reproduction is no longer seen as a necessary part of women's responsibilities to their families and communities (p. 415).

Clegg has a sexual connection with his and Marion's mutual acquaintance Lisa, which constitutes adultery. Clegg is able to use and control Lisa sexually since she is more passive and ineffectual than Marion. Clegg suggests that, when they're in bed together, she should play a submissive sexual role since that's what women are meant to do.

Clegg: I never gave you permission to stand up. Did you know that you can't pass muster unless you lay flat, act extremely femininely, and do exactly what you're told? I like looking at women from behind and below plus a guy on top. You're at the pinnacle of success. And I know that's exactly what you women like. You appreciate my assistance. I never said you had to stand still. However, this was just a reaction (p. 54).

One's social standing is based on one's place in society and one's relationships with other individuals. Gender roles are an excellent barometer of a society's socioeconomic standing. As patriarchy promotes men's dominance in society, economic factors controls and limits women's chances of achieving parity or advancement in social standing. The ability to make and implement one's own choices is important to women's social and economic liberation. Marion is shown in the play as a strong, self-sufficient lady who has risen to the top of her social class via her own efforts. She presumably has a higher salary than Clegg, which is a major issue for him. When Clegg stops working as a butcher to care for Lisa's newborn, Marion is left as the only breadwinner. Clegg is frustrated because, in his view, men are expected to take care of their families financially. However, Marion is cognizant of the fact that she is able to exert her authority over Clegg as a kind of retribution for the past due to her socioeconomic status. Even though a man's place of employment is crucial to his well-being and identity, she plainly despises the butcher shop. But Marion feels it should be shut down while she brags about her huge accomplishment that deserves recognition.

In this way, the *'Owners'* challenges rigid gender stereotypes by inverting the traditional duties of the male and female partners in a marriage. Marion is the leader of the home and the final arbiter of all matters, despite the fact that she is a biological female. It's amusing that Clegg, a prototypical patriarchal guy, is cast in the traditional role of a woman. Therefore, biological causes do not determine gender, as Butler contends.

As Butler (1988) views on it, gender is a transient identity created by ritualised behaviours. Since gender is produced through body stylization, we must understand it as the daily mechanism by which a range of bodily gestures, movements, and enactments generate the illusion of a stable gender.

Women's sociology has included studies and investigations of sex roles. Different hypotheses were proposed to explain the observed disparities in male and female approaches to behaviour. Gender is the physical distinctions between men and women, whereas sex is the culturally determined identity that people exhibit to their community. Therefore, one of the key ideas of *ownership* is upheld by patriarchy: the man 'possesses' the female. Clegg is taken aback by Marion's lack of interest in him since he views her as his personal property. When Worsley describes the material objects like home and car and compares it with wife by saying ... if you want to, you can knock the floor out of a dwelling in your own right. It serves that purpose. It's the same automobile. It's up to you how you choose to drive within acceptable limits of speed. The same as my own flesh and blood..., the response of Clegg is noticeable:

Clegg: A wife comes first and always. As one in the flesh (p. 35)...

There are often three key criteria used to determine a community's view of a woman's position. The first is the fullness and efficacy of a woman's reproductive system. The second one concerns women's

access to and control over crucial spheres of life, such as gainful work, formal education, family planning, and property ownership. Women's networks make up the last chapter. Scientists conduct historical and cross-cultural research to illustrate the different types of communities based on these three canons (Flora, 2005). As a result, the 1970s was the decade in which women first began to make significant and transformative strides in the aforementioned fields. It may be claimed that Marion meets the second and third requirements and that she excels at the third. She makes a career flipping houses, which pisses off Clegg. In addition, her employment and helper, Worsely, have helped her build a network. She goes out to dinner and a strip club with her friends Clegg and Worsely to celebrate her newfound fortune.

By being self-sufficient monetarily and able to exert control over her environment, she challenges the traditional role that patriarchy assigns to women. Regarding contemporary views on the institution of marriage and the role of women within families, she represents a paradigm shift among women of her day. According to Beauvoir:

“However, from a feminist perspective, the era in which we now find ourselves is still one of change. Even among the small percentage of women who do participate in manufacturing, cultural norms and ideals from centuries past persist. Only by looking at how the past tends to repeat itself can we make sense of modern marriage (p. 415).”

By making Marion the ‘father’ of the house while Clegg stays at home and cares for the infant, the author may be rejecting established gender norms. In addition, she supports herself through hard work and effort rather than looking on her spouse as her breadwinner. She does not experience sex-based governmental oppression since she is free to pursue her own life and career without interference. She does not experience physical or emotional abuse at the hands of her husband, and she actively seeks to exert dominance over him with her strong will and confidence. She has strong sexual autonomy. Since Clegg's presence makes no difference to her, she has no qualms about kissing her helper, despite the fact that, according to conventional gender norms, men are supposed to make the first move in a strip joint. All of her behaviour contradicts the cultural standards that establish the patriarchal gender roles that society upholds. She uses language often associated with men to talk about her desire for brutality and ambition.

Marion: You all assume that I will cave in the end. Is it because I'm female? It's in me to be kind. It's expected of me to empathise with a mother's desire to regain custody of her child and that I will not. Soldiers have hacked their way through crowds of civilians. It's okay, I can kill people just as well. Put it in the oven. Sure, why not make myself Genghis Khan? Only through bloodshed can empires rise. I refuse to be timid. No one cares about me at all. But when he's older, he'll insist that he does (p. 62).

She rejects typical female roles and dominates Clegg to the point that she won't even let him argue with her, which just serves to annoy him more. The following dialogues between the two approve the said status when Churchill (p. 60) writes:

Marion: Are you crazy? Getting rid of him? He will no longer be ours once she has control over him. Your little butcher is going to die.
Clegg: No, thank you. A formal, written contract outlining his future would be necessary.

- Marion: There is no shortage of individuals willing to care for infants. His caretaker is professionally trained.
- Clegg: But, Lisa...
- Marion: I stated he'd have a nanny. Do you intend to oppose me, Mr. Clegg? I had the kid for no other reason than you. For you, I purchased him a store. You are free to leave if you are unhappy with the arrangements. Just get out of here. To never see you again would be a great pleasure.

Had Marion been a normal housewife spending her days in cooking, cleaning, and taking care of her husband and child, it's unlikely that she would make such a brazen statement. Therefore, Marion's bold character looks rather out of the norm given the historical period of the play. Because of her authoritarian and dictatorial nature, she often finds herself acting in traditionally masculine positions, such as oppressing, administering, and controlling others around her. She makes things happen for herself so that she may dress, speak, and work in traditionally male roles. Since she has the opportunity to change the status quo for women, she might consider herself fortunate. According to Beauvoir (1956):

“As a result of being trapped in their own world while being surrounded by another, they will never be able to find a place where they can finally feel at peace. Their submission demands an equal and opposite response—a denial for every acceptance they make. While this perspective is similar to that of a young girl, it is more challenging for an adult woman to retain since she is no longer only seeing her life symbolically but is experiencing it firsthand (p. 567).”

Churchill demonstrates in *Owners* that gender stereotypes are a driving force behind setting traditional gender roles for men and women. Negatively labelling women in general with terms like ‘weak’, ‘sensitive’, and ‘soft’ lead to the creation of stereotypes that confine women to certain positions. As a consequence, they are placed in a lower role and given responsibilities that are less crucial and/or simpler than those of their superiors. As a result, the patriarchal system dictates that women cannot be trusted. As stated by Churchill (p. 55):

- Clegg: Has she told you already? She vowed that she would not. This is typical of women. It's in your nature to lie because of Eve. But they underestimate my cunning. All of their quirks and quarrelsomeness are familiar to me. I think you cut things a little too short with her. Unless I was the one thing that caught her eye, that is. A loud yell for more I'm sure she informed you. Or maybe she didn't want it to be the focus. To some extent, I hold back. It is possible more surprises are in store. Your wife is quite low-quality; therefore, I have no interest in wasting my time on her. She served us well. Convenient storage space albeit easily discarded after use. Is that how you feel about Marion, too?

Therefore, not accommodating the biological differences between the sexes presents a significant challenge, especially for women who face societal pressure to conform to stereotypes of helplessness and submission (Fricker, 2007). When these two ideas are at odds, like in Marion's case, it's common for women

to insist on being seen and heard for who they really are, regardless of societal expectations. By rejecting the gender norms that are placed on her, she rebels against Clegg and the patriarchy as a whole.

By having a patriarchal character takes on the role of primary caretaker, Churchill rebels against this conventional gender norm. For Clegg, “even a woman can do it” (p. 54). But strangely, in the end, he stays home with the baby while Marion goes out to work that Clegg believes men should play.

Both sexes are successful in carrying out their assigned roles and making significant contributions to society. However, compared to men, women’s access to resources was restricted, making it more difficult for them to pursue their passions. Due to unequal access to resources, women shifted their focus and assumed different positions in society. Due to their lower economic status, women were placed behind men in society’s pecking order. They’ve traditionally been at a socioeconomic and financial disadvantage. They also had to work within the bounds of their own culture. Thus, women were unable to improve their circumstances independently via dispute with males. To avoid dependence on their husbands, fathers, etc., women were forced to accept the consequences of a subsistence lifestyle, such as starting a house on a tight budget or joining a religious sect. To do more, they had to actively seek out new opportunities or take part in group activities (Jackson, 1998).

Because she is not obligated to produce a family or join a church, Marion may reverse patriarchal gender norms by staying in an abusive marriage with her husband and treating him like a slave. Due to her wealth, she might easily have a new family, but she appears to actively avoid doing so in order to exert greater control over the men in her life. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Marion is still living with him on purpose to cause him psychological distress, just as she did before. For a traditional guy who staunchly supports a male-dominated society, Marion’s denial that this may be done by both sexes is very upsetting.

5. Conclusion

The distinction in the characters of Marion and Lisa highlights the fact that every woman has her own distinct character. But if they can find common ground despite their differences, they can launch a successful uprising against patriarchy. Marion and Lisa are quite different people, yet they have the trait of having unhealthy mental states in common. Churchill’s polarising depictions of these women are meant to illustrate the difficulty all women face when interacting with men like Clegg, regardless of whether she is strong and capable or weak and ineffectual. Churchill also notes, as shown with Marion, that a woman’s social and economic standing correlates with her level of influence in society.

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